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Mike Bullock
Silvestre Szilagyi

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Mike Bullock
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THE PHANTOM

created by LEE FALK

"INVISIBLE CHILDREN"
PART TWO OF THREE

WRITTEN BY *MIKE BULLOCK*
ILLUSTRATED BY *SILVESTRE SZILAGYI*
COLORED BY *BOB PEDROZA*
LETTERED BY *TROY PETERI*
EDITED BY *JOE GENTILE*
COVER BY DARRYL BANKS, TERRY AUSTIN AND BOB PEDROZA
LIMITED COVER BY JOE CORRONEY

SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATORS:
TIM LASIUTA & RICHARD DEAN STARR

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PHANTOM CONSULTANT
ED RHOADES

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Joe Gentile - editor-in-chief
Dave Ulanski - art director
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Greg Gass & Mike Reynolds - ground control
Kathleen O'Brien - web master
Joe Gentile & Dave Ulanski - publishers

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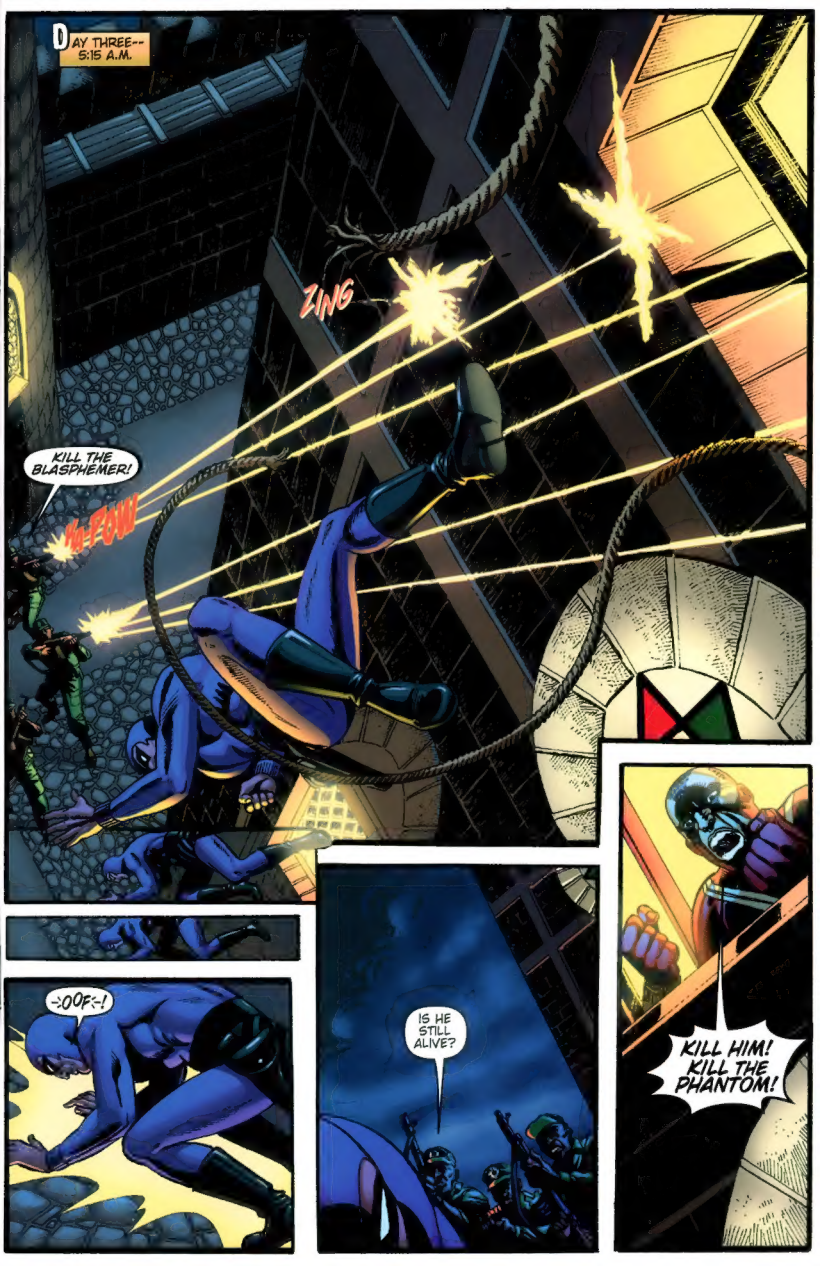

DAY THREE--
5:15 A.M.
ZING
KILL THE BLASPHEMER!
KA-POW!
-OOF-!
IS HE STILL ALIVE?
KILL HIM! KILL THE PHANTOM!

GET UP!
I'm lucky I didn't break anything from that fall. might be better to have them THINK I'm hurt, though.
THAT'LL TEACH ME NOT TO DROP IN UNEXPECTEDLY.
SILENCE!
SHOOT HIM! SHOOT HIM NOW!
HOW DOES IT FEEL KNOWING YOU ARE ABOUT TO DIE, PHANTOM?
SHOOT THE HERETIC!

RAAR-ARRRF
AAAAII!

KRAACK
UUUH!

KILL THEM!
BLAM BLAM BLAM

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

KA-KANG
KANG

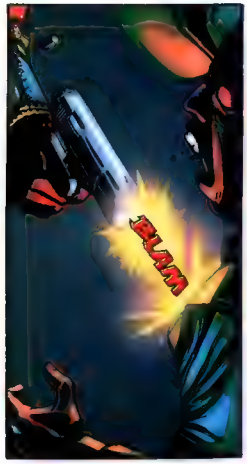
DAY FOUR-
3:10 A.M.
HIM! HIM! HIM! HIM! HIM!
HIM! HIM! HIM! HIM!
HIM! HIM! HIM! HIM! HIM! HIM! HIM!
GRRRRR-AH-AHA-CHCHKK
HIM! HIM! HIM! HIM! HIM! HIM! HIM!
SMAAAAASSH
HIM! HIM!
YOU STOLE MY PAST, BUT YOU WON'T STEAL THEIR FUTURE!
SMAAAAASSH
HIM!

YOU'RE NOT THE LORD!
YOU'RE A CRIMINAL!
A FALSE PROPHET!
WHILE YOU WEAR THE TRAPPINGS OF MY LEGACY AND CLAIM DIVINE ANCESTRY, YOUR EVIL HEART CANNOT BEAR THE WEIGHT OF SELF-SACRIFICE THAT EACH OF THOSE THINGS DEMANDS!
NO!
I AM HIM!
I AM THE ONE TRUE GOD!
NO.
YOU ARE A THIEF OF DREAMS, A STEALER OF LIVES, BOTH LOST AND YET TO BE FOUND.

DAY FOUR--
3:15 A.M.
NOOOO!
NOOO...
JUST A DREAM...
...IT WAS JUST A DREAM.
WHA--
NOOO!
"IT IS TERROR FOR THE EVIL MAN TO AWAKE IN DARKNESS AND SEE THE PHANTOM." OLD JUNGLE SAYING.
NOOO!

YOUR REIGN OF TERROR IS AT AN END. YOU HAVE BROKEN THE JUNGLE LAW. ORDER MUST BE RESTORED.
YOU WOULD DARE!
LORD HIM!
SHOW HIM WHAT IT MEANS TO INSULT YOUR GOD!
BLAM
P-P-P-POW
BLAM

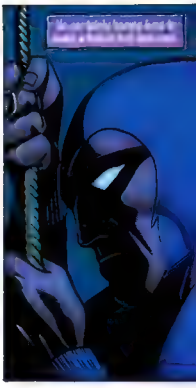
VANISHED...


BLAM

HE FAILED TO GUARD ME WHILE I SLEPT--LET THAT HERETIC INTO MY BEDCHAMBER!
SEE THAT YOU DO NOT MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE!
NOW, GO! PUT EVERY MAN ON ALERT! FIND THE PHANTOM AND BRING ME...

...HIS CORPSE!

LORD HIM'S ORDERS ARE TO FIND THE INTRUDER AND BRING THE BODY HERE, DEAD!



DAY FOUR--
6:00 P.M.
FASTER! WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF DAYLIGHT AND YOU STILL HAVE A LOT MORE TO HARVEST!
GET MOVING! IF YOU WORK ANY SLOWER, I'LL KILL YOU MYSELF!
LOOK!

MOTHER!
PADDY!

"BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER AND I KNEW THE ONLY WAY TO BREAK HIM'S HOLD ON THESE CHILDREN WAS TO BRING THEIR REAL FAMILIES BACK INTO THEIR LIVES."

NAMULI!
OKELLO!
THABO, MY BOY!

FATHER!

MOTHER!

INSOLENT BOY! HIM IS YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER NOW!
CRACK
PADDY! NOOOO!
SHOOT THEM ALL!
SHOOT THEM NOW!

I DON'T THINK SO.
KRACK
THE ONLY THING WORSE THAN A COWARD WHO PREYS ON CHILDREN, IS A PACK OF COWARDS WHO PREY ON CHILDREN.
BLAM BLAM
BLAM BLAM
YAY!
SPREAD OUT! DON'T LET THE HERETIC ESCAPE!

DEATH TO THE HERETIC!
CRUNCH
WHERE--
AAAH!
RAFF
SCREEEEEEEE
AHHH!
NOO--
CRUNCH

SPREAD OUT! IF WE LET HIM GET PAST US, LORD HIM WILL KNOW WE'RE UNWORTHY.
WAAH!

MATOVU!!
WHERE DID HE GO?

ZZZT
ZZZT
UUUHH
AAAHHH

MATOVU!! KOWUMBI!! ANSWER ME!

YOU WILL DELIVER THIS MESSAGE TO YOUR MASTER-- "THE JUNGLE WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE YOUR MASQUERADE."

I'LL KILL YOU!
NO! YOU'LL TAKE MY MESSAGE TO HIM. NOW!
HIM WILL STRIKE YOU DOWN FOR THIS WITH HIS DIVINE POWER, UNBELIEVER!
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU CHILDREN SMILE AGAIN.
YOUR HAPPINESS IS THE ONLY "DIVINE POWER" AT WORK HERE TODAY AND IT'S CALLED 'LOVE'.
DESPITE WHAT HE SAID, HIM IS NO GOD. HE'S NOTHING MORE THAN A BAD MAN. A BULLY WHO SCARES THOSE WHO CAN'T PROTECT THEMSELVES.
TAKE THEM HOME. MAKE SURE THEY'RE SAFE.
"THE SPIRITUAL BOND BETWEEN A PARENT AND CHILD CANNOT BE SEVERED, NO MATTER HOW DEEPLY THE FLESH IS WOUNDED."

LIAR!
LIAR!
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LIAR!
DAY FOUR-- 10:00 P.M.
NO!
W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR YOU, MAJESTY! "THE JUNGLE WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE YOUR MASQUERADE", SO SAYS THE PHANTOM.
YOU DARE!
RRRRRRAAA!
BLAM!
BLASPHEMER!
I GAVE HIM LIFE AND THIS IS HOW HE REPAYS ME?!
WHO ELSE WOULD CHALLENGE ME? WHO ELSE NEEDS A LESSON IN FEARING YOUR GOD?

YOU ARE THE ONE TRUE GOD!
GO THEN! SET MY PLAN IN MOTION. YOUR LORD DEMANDS IT!

DAY FIVE--
3:15 A.M.
MRRMPHH--

WALK FASTER. WE DON'T HAVE ALL NIGHT!
KRUNCH
KRAKK
WHAM
KIDNAPPING IS A VIOLATION OF JUNGLE LAW. PUNISHMENT IS SWIFT HERE.

THAT SHOULD HOLD THEM UNTIL THE JUNGLE PATROL CAN PICK THEM UP.

LOOK! BAD MEN!

DO NOT MOVE, HERETIC. HIM HAS PASSED JUDGMENT ON YOUR SOUL AND SENTENCED YOU--
--TO HELL!
TO BE CONTINUED...

THIS IS NOT JUST A STORY
RIGHT NOW IN NORTHERN UGANDA THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN HAVE BEEN ABDUCTED FROM THEIR HOMES, BEATEN, RAPED, AND FORCED TO KILL OR BE KILLED BY THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY (LRA)

The film "Invisible Children: Rough Cut" follows three young Americans travels to Africa in search of an adventure which transformed into much more when they discover this 20-year-long war. Invisible Children, Inc. is a non-profit organization created in response to the documentary, working to raise awareness, mobilize viewers to action, and provide education for war-affected children.

Watch the "Invisible Children: Rough Cut" film and use YOUR sphere of influence to come up with new, creative ways to help Northern Uganda like the good people at the Moonstone Books have done.

Join us at **invisiblechildren.com** and become a part of this story's end.

Invisible Children .com

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Invisible children

HELP
CHANGE CULTURE,
POLICY & LIVES

The term "precious natural resources" conjures images of oil, wood, land, metals, gems and other material items. Things you obtain, possess and use for purposes that advance your desires.

What most people fail to see is that the world's single most precious resource is the life of a child.

While wood and metals are critical in the building of homes, shelters and businesses, and without oil, we couldn't power cars, trucks, planes or trains, none of this would matter if somewhere in time the mind of a properly nurtured child hadn't matured and seen the potential hidden in these things.

A child's life isn't something to be obtained, possessed or used. No, the life of a child is a resource full of potential that needs to be grown and allowed to blossom unchecked by the agendas of men.

A child's imagination is one of the most powerful forces on Earth and when children are taught to love, respect and engage in the world around them, great things happen. Think of the world's marvels and remember, someone nurtured a child until they took their vision and believed strongly enough to make it reality.

Medicines, airplanes, motion pictures, the internet, space shuttles, the Space Needle, these were all the dreams of children who were nurtured into adulthood and enabled to bring these visions to life.

However, children can also be taught terrible things, such as racism, hatred, cruelty and intolerance. When this happens, not only is the child robbed of their rightful future, but the world is robbed of the wonderful accomplishments that child could have made for all.

Even worse is when those who would use children for their own desires replace innocence with a gun and turn a child's dreams to nightmares.

Such people exist right now. Across the globe right this minute, are tortured children turned into men who now pass on their legacy of pain and hatred to a new generation of little ones. Robbing the world of all the wondrous things these kids could have given us.

While we lay in bed at night, inside a home brought to life from someone's imagination, snug in a bed covered with blankets in a room environmentally controlled for our comfort, one such man is stealing children from their beds, blankets and dreams.

His name is irrelevant. His deeds are unforgivable.

In the time it took you to read this book, thousands of children have taken one step further into their nightmares and away from the dreams that make this world a wonderful place. Away from the dreams that brought you the bulb you use to cast light on this page. Away from the dreams that created the engine that powered your car to the store to pick this up.

And in the time it takes you or I to realize how blessed we are and what a terrible injustice is being perpetrated by the Ugandan Warlord, even more children have lost their lives.

Torture. Rape. Mutilation.

No child dreams of these things. No, these are the landscapes explored in nightmares. Nightmares brought on when the innocence of a child is murdered.

It's not often I ask anything of you in the pages of the books I author. But, this is just too big to let it go by without asking you to help us bring these children back to the life they should be leading, free from torture. Free from war. Free from the pain they feel every day.

To learn how you can bring an end to these nightmares and protect he dreams of children, navigate your web browser to www.invisiblechildren.com

Thank you,

-Mike Bullock

Invisible children

HELP
CHANGE CULTURE,
POLICY & LIVES

BEHIND THE MASK

By Ed Rhoades

Secret identities! Most of the costumed superheroes have them. It's a tried and tested tradition for fictional heroes predating even the Phantom. The Scarlet Pimpernel was Sir Percy Blakeney and Zorro was Don Diego de la Vega.

Superman is really mild mannered Clark Kent. Batman is actually Bruce Wayne (except for that time he was Jean-Paul Valley...or Azrael). The Flash (who at least owes the idea for his skintight suit and cowl to The Phantom) sped through a bunch of secret identities...Jay Garrick, Barry Allen, Wally West and Bart Allen. Secret identities make sense. The famed crime fighter would need a place where he could kick back without the threat of people stalking him or fans making demands.

Plus it gave more problems for the hero having to deal with keeping his secret from those around him and finding excuses to escape. It was another ongoing plot device.

"Clark Kent was sort his vacation from being Superman. ..But the Phantom sacrifices his identity to be the Phantom," explained former syndicated Phantom artist Keith Williams.

Lee Falk even considered it for The Phantom. In the pilot story, playboy Jimmy Wells was created as The Phantom's secret identity. But as the story progressed, Lee's vision became more unique and he developed the mystique of the skull cave in deepest darkest Africa.

The Phantom is known by many names...The Ghost Who Walks, Guardian of the Easter Dark, The Man Who Cannot Die...but none of them could be considered a secret identity. There has been a little suspense in keeping the secret of The Unknown Commander of the Jungle Patrol, but they weren't problems that impacted The Phantom's daily routine.

The Phantom only disguises himself as Mr. Walker when he travels incognito. He lives his life in costume at both of his jungle homes, but neither place is accessible to the public so a secret identity is unnecessary.

The secret problem that causes the most difficulty for The Phantom is not who he is... but the legend of his immortality. To keep that idea going, he has to be fearless and literally death defying...leaping from cliffs, fighting sharks with a knife, wrestling tigers barehanded...a superhero without superpowers. He doesn't wear the mask to hide his identity. He wears the mask to define it.

In April of 2007, Silver Bullet Comics conducted interviews with Danica Russell of Invisible Children and Mike Bullock, writer of The Phantom. The following, in-depth article, is a result of those interviews.
Part II

The current Phantom is the twenty-first man in a line of heroes, born and bred to live out his pedigree of fighting cruelty, greed and injustice. Couple that with twenty one generations of heroes to read stories about and you have a character that is at once the basis for many of today's favorite comic book heroes and unique from them at the same time. Only Zorro has had a bigger influence on the modern, "mainstream" comic book mythos."

So many superheroes are based in the United States, primarily on the East Coast, but not the Phantom. "The Ghost Who Walks" continues to operate out of Africa where he's most likely to stay.

"I believe it's essential to the character, since he's based in an African nation," explained Bullock. "Moving him from there to say, Manhattan would make about as much sense as moving Batman to Borneo. That doesn't mean you won't find him in other locals, such as Middle America in issues 14 and 15, or France in issue 20. The Phantom is an international hero who happens to live in Northern Africa."

With The Phantom being such a stalwart in American pulp culture one would think it's the perfect outlet to promote causes such as the Ugandan conflict. But information on the conflict may not be as commonplace to fans of comics or specifically of The Phantom. And there's also the concern of comic readers being turned off by the socio political nature of the story. Bullock and Russell look at it from another point of view though.

"The concern that people are not aware of this is the driving force behind this arc," said Bullock. "One thing I've learned in my brief writing career is that comic readers, retailers and creators are some of the most generous, kind hearted people you can ever hope to meet. I know that most, if not all, of the folks I've encountered in this industry would not stand for this sort of injustice and would want to do anything and everything they could to help. The only thing stopping them, I believe, is the lack of knowledge about the situation."

Russell added, "With anyone that we partner with, we hope that people realize that there's a world outside of themselves and there's a lot to be done and it's easy to get involved. Hopefully, we can help them do that. Buying the comic book—that's step one in helping out. Step two is [the reader] finding out where they can help next."

And that's where it all starts, with buying the book, which will hopefully lead to more awareness and donations to the cause.

"That's exactly what we're hoping for," confirms Bullock. "With every "B" cover ordered, Moonstone Books will be making a donation to www.invisiblechildren.com and I will also be donating a portion of each check I receive for writing the scripts. In addition, I plan on auctioning off an Invisible Children care package featuring signed comics, scripts and possibly some original artwork, with the proceeds from the auction going directly to IC.

So far, I've spoken with numerous people who've heard of this and plan to buy multiple copies of the books to give away in order to spread the message, all the while making direct donations to the Invisible Children organization.

But Bullock is going even farther than just the comic story itself.

"While the story inside is a fictionalized version of the events in Uganda, I'll be writing a three-part article to accompany each issue, telling readers about the real events this story is based upon. In addition, Phantom expert and world authority, Ed Rhoades, is crafting three special Behind The Mask columns to run in each issue as well, giving folks insight into the Phantom's history of bringing awareness to this sort of injustice. The kind folks at Invisible Children will also be running a page in each issue detailing their involvement with the movement and educating readers on the situation and how they can help."

Even though this story arc is only three issues, it won't be the last we'll see of The Phantom involved in African crises. But that doesn't mean Bullock is writing the book with any agenda.

"I'm sure we'll see The Phantom involved in more of these sorts of situations in the future, as it's ingrained in the character to do such things. I've currently plotted out to giant sized issue 25 and while there are no stories of this type before issue 25, rest assured there will be more afterward.

As for an agenda, I don't really have one other than to craft the best Phantom stories I can. With that being said, I don't want each issue to feature some real world travesty, as it will dilute the message and seriousness of such events, which is something I struggled with in creating the Invisible Children arc. No comic book can ever really right an injustice such as this, but if it brings more attention to it, and empowers those who read the book to help balance the scales, then justice will be served and the suffering of the children can be lessened and hopefully, some day alleviated."

While the comic benefit covers are great, they are only the first step in getting involved with the movement, as Russell explains.

"We just started a program called "Schools for Schools," where schools all over the US are partnered with schools in Uganda. On the website, you can see different ways in which people are doing fundraisers. It runs the gamut with all different kinds of creative fundraisers. And with video, you can see how those funds are reaching the ground [in Uganda]. Raised enough for bathrooms, or raised enough to get clean water or computers—we're trying to give children affected by the war hope for the future. That seems like an easy step two.

So, step one: buy the comic. Step two: show the Invisible Children video to friends and discuss ways in which you can get involved and help."

And to take supporters even deeper into the experience of what the Ugandan people are subjected to, on April 28th in 15 cities across the US Invisible Children will initiate a 24-hour Displace Me program where you will give up your food and shelter for one full day. The program will serve to make people aware of the hardships these people suffer in hopes of connecting with the emotions and compassion of those participating. Many of the Ugandan people who have lost their homes are relegated to concentration camps with absolutely no luxuries. The Displace Me program will help to enlighten people to just a taste of this travesty.

Beyond comics and films and programs like Displace Me, Invisible Children hopes to continue to diversify its efforts to reach and educate even more people to their cause.

"I hope so," says Russell. "Every type of fundraiser is unexpected, and that's exciting. I hope we can go off in a million different directions after this."

Special thanks to contributing writer Bryan Sandala, and to Mike Bullock and Danica Russell for taking the time to share this important message with SBC and all of comicdom.

Moonstone Books would like to thank the fine folks at Silver Bullet Comics for the time and energy put into this article.

To learn how you can do more, visit www.invisiblechildren.com

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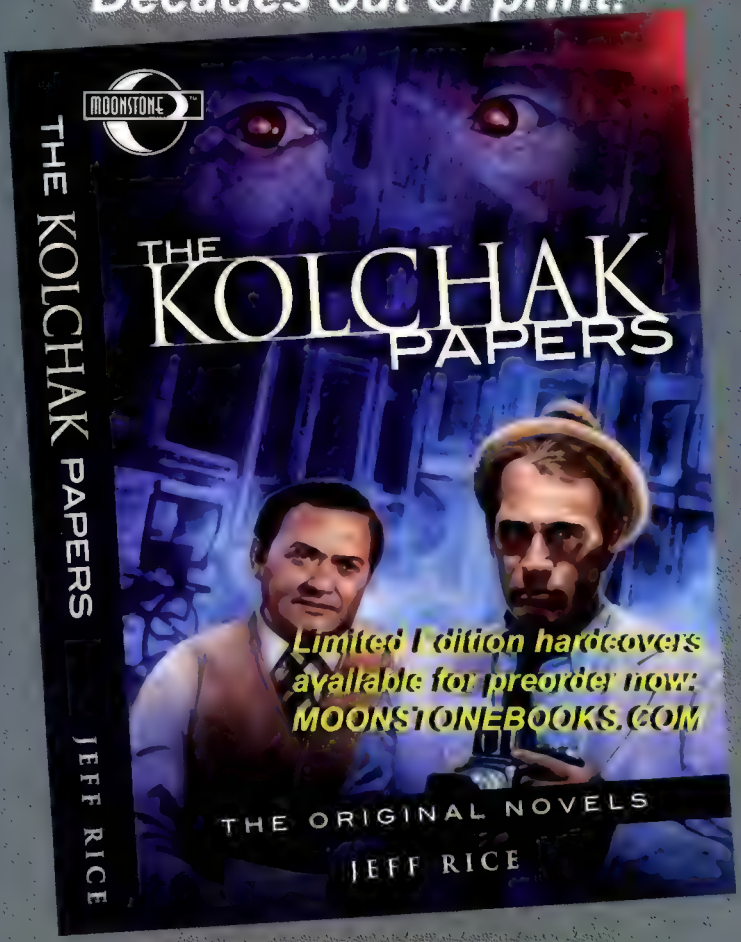

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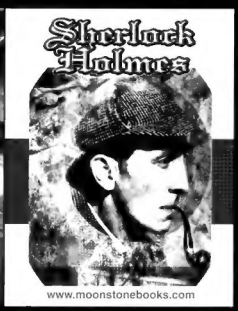
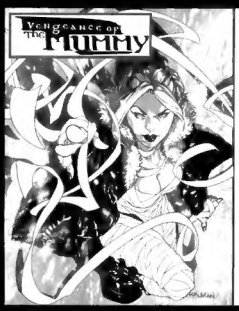
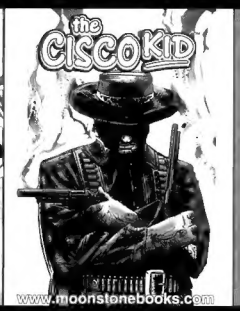
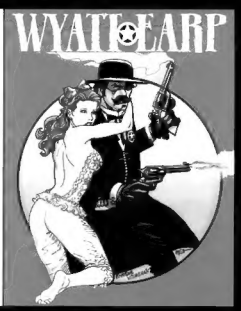


Cool gifts like: Shirts, Hats, Mugs, etc !







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